Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (*Currently Amended*) Apparatus for determining the award of a plurality of prizes ~~having respective prize values~~ between an upper ~~prize~~ limit value and a lower ~~prize~~ limit value, the upper ~~prize~~ limit value being greater than the lower ~~prize~~ limit value, including:

memory for storing data indicative of a current prize value, the upper ~~prize~~ limit value, and the lower ~~prize~~ limit value;

an input device ~~that is~~ responsive to input signals from a ~~respective~~ plurality of gaming terminals for providing an increment signal;

a controller ~~that is~~ configured to define ~~the~~ a current prize value ~~as a first of the prize values~~, the controller being additionally configured to be responsive to the increment signal for incrementing an accumulated value toward the current prize value; and

a comparator that ~~is responsive to~~ compares the current prize value and the accumulated value ~~for determining~~ to determine, for a first prize determination process, if the current prize value is to be awarded and, if so, ~~generating~~ generates an award signal ~~that actuates the controller to define the current prize value as a second of the prize values~~;

wherein the controller is ~~additionally~~ configured to, following a determination that the current prize value is to be awarded,

reset the accumulated value ~~to one or another~~ of either the upper ~~prize~~ limit value or the lower ~~prize~~ limit value, such that <u>for consecutive prize determination processes the controller alternates between resetting the accumulated value to the upper limit value and resetting the accumulated value to the lower limit value, and</u>

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~~define a new current prize value for a subsequent prize determination process~~ ~~on at least one occasion the controller resets the accumulated value to the upper prize~~ ~~value and on at least one other occasion the controller resets the accumulated value to~~ ~~the lower prize value~~.

2.   Cancelled.

3.   Cancelled.

4.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the controller alternates between a mode wherein the accumulated value increments upwardly toward the current prize value, and a mode wherein the accumulated value increments downwardly toward the current prize value.

5.   Cancelled.

6.   Cencelled.

7.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals are respective gaming machines.

8.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals are computer devices such as stand alone desktop computers.

9.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals include gaming machines and computer devices.

10.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the computer devices are linked to the apparatus via web-enabled or other online interfaces.

11.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, further including a payout device that is responsive to the increment signal and the award signal for selecting the terminal to which the prize is awarded.

12.   (*Original*) Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein each terminal includes a gaming balance and the payout device, upon selecting the terminal, credits the respective gaming balance.

13.   (*Original*) Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the payout device credits the gaming balance by the accumulated value.

14.   (*Previously Presented*) Apparatus according to claim 1, further including a display driver for providing persons using the terminals with a visual indication of the accumulated value.

15.   (*Previously Presented*)   Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the terminals including gaming machines located in an establishment, the display driver is a dedicated hardware and software device that drives an LED display that is prominently located within the establishment.

16.   (*Previously Presented*)   Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the terminals include computer devices and the display driver is coded into communications protocol between the apparatus and the computer devices.

17.   (*Currently Amended*)   Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the driver also provides persons using the terminals with a visual indication of one or more of:

the upper ~~prize~~ limit value;

the lower ~~prize~~ limit value; and

whether the accumulated value is incrementing toward the upper or the lower ~~prize~~ limit value.

18.   (*Previously Presented*)   Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the comparator is part of the controller.

19.   (Cancelled)

20.   (Cancelled)

21.   (Cancelled)

22.   (Cancelled)

23.   (Cancelled)

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24.   (Cancelled)

25.   (*Currently Amended*)   A method for determining the award of a plurality of prizes, comprising ~~having respective prize values, the method including~~:

storing in a memory device data indicative of a current prize value;

~~being~~ operating an input device to be responsive to input signals from a respective plurality of gaming terminals for providing an increment signal;

~~providing~~ operating a controller to define a ~~for defining the~~ current prize value ~~as a first of the prize values~~ and ~~being~~ to be responsive to the increment signal for incrementing an accumulated value toward the current prize value; ~~and~~

~~being~~ operating a comparator to be responsive to the current prize value and the accumulated value for determining if the current prize value is to be awarded for a first prize determination process and, if so, generating an award signal ~~that actuates the controller to define the current prize value as a second of the prize values~~; and

operating the controller to be responsive to the award signal for defining a new current prize value for a subsequent prize determination process;

wherein ~~on one occasion~~ the controller is configured, for consecutive prize determination processes, to alternate between incrementing the accumulated value ~~increments~~ upwardly toward the current prize value, and ~~on another occasion~~ incrementing the accumulated value ~~increments~~ downwardly toward the current prize value.

26.   (Cancelled)

27.   (Cancelled)

28.   (*Currently Amended*) A method of awarding a plurality of prizes <u>in a gaming system</u> ~~having respective prize values~~, comprising:

     (a)   monitoring wagers from multiple terminals <u>of the gaming system</u>;

     (b)   setting a current prize value <u>for a first prize determination process</u> ~~to a first prize value~~;

     (c)   incrementing an accumulated value in accordance with the wagers until the accumulated value is equal to or beyond a threshold;

     (d)   identifying the terminal whose wager resulted in the accumulated value being equal to or beyond the threshold;

     (e)   setting ~~the~~ <u>a new</u> current prize value <u>for a subsequent prize determination process</u> ~~to a second prize value~~; and

     (f)   repeating steps (c) and (d);

<u>wherein, for consecutive prize determination processes, the process alternates between incrementing the accumulated value upwardly toward the current prize value, and incrementing the accumulated value downwardly toward the current prize value</u>

~~wherein on one occasion the accumulated value increments upwardly toward the threshold, and on another occasion the accumulated value increments downwardly toward the threshold~~.

29.   (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value.

30.   (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value and step (c) comprises incrementing the accumulated value until the accumulated value is equal to the current prize value.

31.   (*Previously Presented*)   The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value and step (c) comprises incrementing the accumulated value until the accumulated value is beyond the current prize value.

32.   (*Currently Amended*)   The method according to claim 29, further comprising defining an upper ~~prize~~ limit value and a lower ~~prize~~ limit value, wherein steps (b) and (e) comprise setting the current prize value between the upper ~~prize~~ limit value and the lower ~~prize~~ limit value.

33.   (*Currently Amended*)   The method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) comprises setting the current prize value between the accumulated value and the upper ~~prize~~ limit value, and step (e) comprises setting the current prize value between the accumulated value and the lower ~~prize~~ limit value.

34.   (*Currently Amended*)   The method according to claim 32, further comprising displaying the accumulated value, the upper ~~prize~~ limit value, and the lower ~~prize~~ limit value.

35.   (*Currently Amended*)   The method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) comprises setting the accumulated value to the upper ~~prize~~ limit value, and step (e) comprises setting the accumulated value to the lower ~~prize~~ limit value.

36.   (*Previously Presented*)   The method according to claim 29, wherein step (a) comprises monitoring wagers from the multiple terminals, wherein each of the multiple terminals are executing games that are otherwise independent of one another.

37.   (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 29, wherein step (c) comprises weighting the wagers.

38.   (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 29, further comprising awarding the first and second prize values to players associated with the identified terminals.